

Hannah Cradit – Artist’s Statement



Blank Stare (Diptych)



Judgement



Melting Point

Vulnerability in Emotions

I have the faintest memory of picking up a pencil and just starting to figure out which hand I was most comfortable using when drawing. Those kinds of moments are not significant to a lot of people, but they are significant to me. I always remember wanting to draw because it made me happy, especially when my parents were fighting. At a young age drawing became my therapeutic outlet, a way to focus my emotions. Growing up I had to act tougher than I was because I would get picked on for being too emotional. My defense is to show through my painting that showing emotions is human and healthy.

When creating a piece, I get lost. Instincts take over and I just go, I think about the thing that made me feel the way I did while showing the emotion on my canvas. Sometimes, doing this is hard, artists are working with a specific subject for hours to days on end until it is finished, and it can take a mental toll especially if the topic is a lot for us to handle. Painting is what I used to focus my energy on, but I found that my emotions needed more materials to help define them. *Aftermath* is of a broken mirror, which represents this surge of anger and feeling of frustration that I had felt for a long period of time, I sat staring at it for two weeks until I put it away. I came back to it a month later to finish it, this was when I didn't feel the same but could reflect on how I felt. This pause was necessary to complete the piece, allowing perspective from the intensity of emotion, so as not to be overwhelmed. My primary concern in my work is finding emotional balance but I am also thinking about the formal elements of texture and color to help enhance the inner balance.

Texture creates such interest in everything around us, so when given the opportunity to work texture into some pieces to create dimension and depth I had to take the chance and see if I could succeed. In *Melting Point* I use my brush strokes to create a textured background, to make it seem as if there are sparks flying around the candle flame. This creates a point of interest and adds detail to the body. Although, the piece is not textured and shows more elusive texture it still adds to the emotional aspects of the piece because it shows the sparks of hard work coming from the flame and the woman is slowly melting from giving her all. In a few other pieces I create a

textured look with my paint with the way I mix it on the canvas, although it is completely flat, it still has a textured feel to it. There are a few artworks though such as *Heartless* and *Love Yourself* where there is physical texture on the canvas. *Heartless* shows a nude woman laying on her back with these three-dimensional petals made from acrylic modeling paste surrounding and overlapping parts of her to make the body seem to go into the background but still be the focus. Then with my piece *Love Yourself*, the collaged elements of the faux flowers create a three-dimensional surface.

Color is one of the more essential elements in some of my pieces. When I was younger, I had a mood ring and it always fascinated me how the color of the pendant would change based on your mood. As I got older, I continued to associated colors with emotions, in my piece *Heartless*, the body of the woman is a blue color which represents sadness, she also is holding her chest which bears a hole of darkness and at that time that is what was felt when creating the piece; sadness from loss. Another piece that color is used purposefully in is *Self-Care*. The woman's body is yellow and green, which could represent anxiety and the background is an orange into red which can represent anger. These two emotions have been known to collide at times and the woman is curled into a ball in a way to self sooth and protect herself. Similarly, in *Judgement*, color is used in the body of water because the eyes are shedding tears to show sadness and the eyes are a red color to signify rage. There is a lot going on in this piece but how the colors work together is important. Viewers are able to interpret emotions not only from the colors but also from the poses and the content of the artworks.

Because of grade school the first artist I grew to love was Vincent Van Gogh. We focused on the *Starry Night* painting, how and why he created it. I fell in love with Van Gogh's work, but I also think of his story and how tortured he was. The thing that brought him peace and a sense of purpose was his art, there were times when he was struggling creatively, financially, and mentally but he was always able to turn back to his work. It feels relatable.

Another artist I look to is Hannah Wilke. She was a photographer, painter, and sculptor. Hannah was controversial for her works because they were based on feminism, sexuality and femininity; I thought at first how radical of her to just stick it to the man and not care what others think. I realized that so many people are stuck in their heads and hide. If she could be so brave, then why can't I?

It is beautiful and human to show one's emotions. I wanted my pieces to show emotions and feelings, but also the vulnerability in them. I personally am still learning that it is okay to show these things and to feel the way I feel. So, please feel the way you feel, be brave. Be vulnerable.